

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017218

FOLLOWING REPEAT MEXICO 1094 SENT ACTION SECSTATE JAN 20.

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 01094

DEPT. PASS JUSTICE FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, DEA FOR THE
ADMINISTRATOR, AND WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM FOR PETER
BOURNE

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, MX

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS - GOM REQUESTS ELIMINATION OF DEA
SPOTTERS

REF: MEXICO 00901

1. REFTEL REPORTED THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE HAD
REQUESTED THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL DEA TDY SPOTTERS FOLLOW-
ING BRIEF COUNTRY-WIDE RECONNAISSANCE SWEEP, AND THAT
AMBASSADOR HAD OBTAINED AGREEMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL
FLORES TO MAINTAIN STATUS QUO UNTIL ATTORNEYS GENERAL
FLORES AND BELL COULD DISCUSS ISSUE DURING LATTER'S
VISIT IN EARLY FEBRUARY.

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2. DURING THE TIME OBTAINED BY THE AMBASSADOR, WE WILL
ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP A SERIES OF OPTIONS FOR WASHINGTON
CONSIDERATION. MEANWHILE, FLORES HAS AGREED TO REQUIRE
NO IMMEDIATE CHANGES, AND WE RECOMMEND THAT THE PROBLEM
REMAIN DORMANT UNTIL FLORES RAISES THE ISSUE WITH
ATTORNEY GENERAL BELL, WHO MAY WISH TO DEAL WITH THE
ISSUE PERSONALLY DURING HIS VISIT OR SUGGEST TO FLORES

THAT HE PURSUE THE MATTER WITH THE EMBASSY.

3. IN DEVELOPING OUR RESPONSE WE MUST TRY TO DETERMINE WHAT MOTIVATED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S EXECUTIVE OFFICER, FERNANDO BAEZA, TO OPEN A SUBJECT THAT WE HAD THOUGHT CLOSED, AND TO ASSESS THE CONSTRAINTS WHICH MAY LIMIT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S FLEXIBILITY. SIMILARLY, WE MUST KEEP IN MIND AND PROTECT WHAT WE PERCEIVE AS OUR ESSENTIAL INTERESTS IN THIS AREA.

4. ON THE MEXICAN SIDE, TWO THINGS ARE IMMEDIATELY APPARENT. THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION WITH ACTING NARCOTICS ATTACHE SAUCEDO, BAEZA ATTRIBUTED ALL OF THE OPINIONS HE EXPRESSED TO ATTORNEY GENERAL FLORES. PAST EXPERIENCE WITH BAEZA ON NARCOTICS, PRISONER TRANSFER, EXTRADITION, ETC., HAS SHOWN THAT HE NEVER SPEAKS IN THIS FASHION UNLESS HE HAS, IN FACT, BEEN AUTHORIZED TO DO SO BY FLORES. THIS READING IS SUPPORTED BY THE FACT THAT DURING THE AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH FLORES, FLORES DID NOT DENY THAT HE WISHED THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE "TRIZO" PERSONNEL BUT MERELY AGREED TO POSTPONE ANY ACTION UNTIL HE HAD DISCUSSED THE ISSUE WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL BELL. SECONDLY, BAEZA STRESSED TO SAUCEDO THAT THE REQUEST SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN UNFRIENDLY ACT. ON THE CONTRARY, HE ARGUED, THE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN IS ESSENTIAL TO AND IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND HE ATTRIBUTED THE REQUEST TO FLORES' DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN RATHER THAN WEAKEN THE CAMPAIGN. (HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, EXPLAIN THE TIMING OR THE ABRUPTNESS OF THE REQUEST, NOR DID HE COMMENT ON THE LACK OF PRIOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EMBASSY.)

5. WHAT MOTIVATED THE REQUEST? WE HAVE HEARD CONSISTENTLY SINCE LAST JUNE THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S GOAL IS A TOTALLY MEXICAN NARCOTICS PROGRAM, WITH INTERIM USG PARTICIPATION LIMITED TO THOSE AREAS IN WHICH MEXICO NEEDS ASSISTANCE. THIS THEME FIRST SURFACED IN THE NEGOTIATION OF THE MAINTENANCE FUNDING AGREEMENT WHICH WAS DELAYED IN THE FOREIGN SECRETARIAT BECAUSE IT "PERMITTED GROSS USG INTERVENTION IN MEXICAN AFFAIRS". AS REPORTED IN 77 MEXICO 09271, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OBTAINED FOREIGN SECRETARIAT CLEARANCE BY STATING THAT THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE AGREEMENT WAS TO OBTAIN USG ASSISTANCE WHICH WOULD EVENTUALLY PERMIT MEXICO TO DISCHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES WITHOUT THE LARGE NUMBERS OF U.S. PERSONNEL WHICH ARE NOW NEEDED. SIMILARLY, WHEN HE REQUESTED IN SEPTEMBER THAT OPERATIONAL MISSIONS NOT BE FLOWN BY DEA AIRCRAFT, HE ARGUED THAT HE HAD SUFFICIENT AIRCRAFT AND PILOTS

TO DO THE JOB AND THAT THE POTENTIAL POLITICAL LIABILITIES OF THIS SPECIFIC US INVOLVEMENT OUTWEIGHED ANY ADVANTAGE OF CONTINUING TO USE USG AIRCRAFT AND PILOTS. THE PRESENT REQUEST CAN, THEREFORE, REASONABLY BE INTERPRETED AS A CONTINUATION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DESIRE TO TERMINATE ANOTHER ASPECT OF USG INVOLVEMENT, WHICH IN HIS VIEW, IS NO LONGER NEEDED.

6. IN PRACTICAL TERMS, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT "TRIZO" PERSONNEL IN THE FIELD HAVE IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS AND CAUSED THEM TO BE CALLED TO THE ATTENTION OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT IN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE. IT WOULD BE REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT THE MIDDLE MANAGERS INVOLVED HAVE EXPRESSED RESENTMENT OF THIS "WATCHDOG" CONFIDENTIAL

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FUNCTION. THIS MAY BE PART OF THE "POLITICAL" PROBLEM TO WHICH FLORES REFERS. WE RECOGNIZE THAT OUR TECHNICAL ADVISERS HAVE GENERATED SIMILAR PROBLEMS FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT BUT THEIR PRESENCE IS TOLERATED BECAUSE THE MEXICANS PERCEIVE THEIR EXPERTISE AS STILL NECESSARY. YET FLORES AND BAEZA CONTINUE TO STATE THAT WE WILL BE ASKED TO WITHDRAW EVEN THESE PARTICIPANTS AS SOON AS THEIR SKILLS ARE NO LONGER NEEDED.

7. IN CITING THE "EXTREME SENSITIVITY" OF THE MILITARY TO A USG PRESENCE IN A FIELD OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY, BAEZA IS ALMOST CERTAINLY REFLECTING COMMENTS MADE TO HIM BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE GALVAN, A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND. WHILE EMBASSY NARCOTICS OFFICERS VISITING THE FIELD HAVE HAD UNUSUALLY OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, GALVAN HIMSELF IS PROBABLY THE MOST NATIONALISTIC MINISTER IN THE PRESENT CABINET, IN ADDITION TO BEING FIRMLY ANTI-COMMUNIST, ULTRA CONSERVATIVE, AND ESSENTIALLY PRO-AMERICAN. THIS INCLINATION IS PROBABLY NOW REINFORCED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S MOVE TOWARD LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN MEXICO, A GROUP WHICH CAN BE EXPECTED TO DIRECT ITS ATTACKS TOWARD THE ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE MILITARY. GALVAN MAY WELL HAVE INDICATED HIS CONCERN THAT CONTINUED MILITARY SUPPORT OF THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM CANNOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS FOREIGN PARTICIPATION IS REDUCED TO AN ABSOLUTELY BARE MINIMUM, THEREBY LIMITING THE POSSIBILITY OF PROPOGANDA CONNECTING THE MILITARY WITH "FOREIGN INTERVENTION". BAEZA DID TELL SAUCEDO THAT JOINT MILITARY-ATTORNEY GENERAL PLANS ARE ALMOST ALWAYS APPROVED IMMEDIATELY BY GALVAN, BUT THAT PLANS SUBMITTED TO GALVAN WHICH MENTION DEA PERSONNEL ARE NOT EVEN ACKNOWLEDGED BY GALVAN. GRANTED THE UNPRECEDENTED MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE NAR-CONFIDENTIAL

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COTICS PROGRAM AND FLORES' DESIRE FOR EVEN GREATER MILITARY PARTICIPATION, FLORES PROBABLY FEELS THAT HE HAS MUCH MORE TO GAIN FROM THE MILITARY THAN FROM "TRIZO" PERSONNEL.

8. ON THE U.S. SIDE, WE FEEL THAT THE USG ALSO HAS SEVERAL INTERESTS TO PROTECT. FIRST OF ALL, IT IS PATENTLY IN OUR INTEREST THAT NEITHER WE NOR THE MEXICANS TAKE ANY ACTION WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN. SIMILARLY, WE NEED A MEANS TO ASSURE OURSELVES THAT THE CAMPAIGN IS EFFECTIVE, AND THIS REQUIRES CONTACT WITH OPERATIONAL PERSONNEL IN THE FIELD, AN ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE OPERATIONS, AND AN INCREASED OPPORTUNITY TO INSPECT INDIVIDUAL FIELDS TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OPERATION AND TO HAVE SOME INDICATION OF WHETHER FIELDS ARE HARVESTED BEFORE SPRAYING. CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN FIELD-LEVEL PLANNING SESSIONS IS ALSO REQUIRED BOTH TO ASSURE PROPER AND TIMELY USG INPUTS AND TO IDENTIFY AND RESOLVE PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY HAVE A DELITERIOUS IMPACT ON THE CAMPAIGN. ON THE INTELLIGENCE SIDE, WE FEEL THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE ACCESS TO ARRESTED FARMERS AND BROKERS, AND THAT INFORMANT NETWORKS TARGETTED AGAINST OPIUM CULTIVATION AND MARKETING PATTERNS SHOULD CONTINUE.

9. WE PLAN TO TRANSMIT OUR ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE OPTIONS AND OUR RECOMMENDATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOLLOWING THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT. MEANWHILE, WE WOULD WELCOME ANY VIEWS THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES BELIEVE SHOULD FIGURE IN OUR DELIBERATIONS. LUCEY UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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